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THE MAGIC OF WORDS¹

God wove a web of loveliness,
Of clouds and stars and birds,
But made not anything at all
So beautiful as words.

They shine around our simple earth
With golden shadowings,
And every common thing they touch
Is exquisite with wings.

So sang Anna Hemstead Branch. And so singing she has reminded us of the wonderful allurements, of the bright capacity for melody, of the rich and glowing color, and of the strange secrets of magic which fall from the lips of a man who knows how to turn speech into a weapon. It was said of a man in a notable debate: "He struck his opponent with a word. He felled him with a phrase. He slew him with a sentence. He buried him in one last explosive period of powerful argument."

There is no more curious weakness than the helplessness of some men of intellectual discipline in the presence of words. Great burly words overawe them. They have ideas, but the gay mocking words which they want to use in expressing their thoughts make faces at them and run off quite beyond reach. There is no more immediate evidence of a fine and vigorous culture than the capacity to bend words to the purpose of one's mind with the strength of an assured mastery. "I am going to make words my slaves," said a virile student in a certain university. There was many a stiff fight. The words were fierce young steeds not at all easy to tame. But at last they made the inevitable surrender. And another man was ready to do a man's work with the language which so many men about him used with slovenly incapacity. There is no end of significant things which can engage the attention of the college student. And one of the genuinely important and challenging tasks of his college career has to do with the taming of words so that they will come when they are called.

LYNN HAROLD HOUGH

INFLATED CURRENCY²

Speech is a sort of currency. It is the currency of the mind. And it is a currency which suffers from all the period of inflation. Indeed,

¹ Originally used by the author at Northwestern University.

² From bulletin of Central M. E. Church, Detroit, August 28, 1921.